

schools set up under the projects. This issue was also deliberated upon by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The Court has given several directions, in their judgement dated 10.12.96, including payment of compensation by the employers, employing children in hazardous occupations. The Government has already taken a number of steps to implement these directions.

Hospitals of Indian Red Cross Society

64. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the hospitals set up by the Indian Red Cross Society to treat victims of 1984 Bhopal Gas disaster at Bhopal are on the verge of closure;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of Central assistance provided to the State Government and to the Indian Red Cross Society for victims of Bhopal Gas disaster during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) According to information received from Indian Red Cross Society, the hospitals set up by IRCS to treat the victims of 1984 of the Bhopal Gas Disaster have not closed down but the number of patients visiting these Medical Centres have now come down.

(c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

[Translation]

Indians in Saudi Arabia

65. SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been large scale harassment of Indians in Saudi Arabia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some Indians are missing from January 1997 in Saudi Arabia; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to trace them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) to (d) There have been no reports of large scale harassment of Indians in Saudi Arabia. By and large, Indians in Saudi Arabia are satisfied with their living and working conditions. In relation to the approximately 1.5 million Indian workers in Saudi Arabia, the number of complaints is very small. The complaints of harassment received from time to time mostly relate to non-payment of wages, long and arduous hours of work without adequate compensation, denial of leave to come to India, withholding of travel documents by the sponsors, non-fulfilment of contractual obligations, ill-treatment, etc

Out of the 1.5 million Indian workers in Saudi Arabia, the majority of them work in the interior parts of the country. Whenever our Embassy in Riyadh or the Consulate General in Jeddah receives any report about a missing Indian, they promptly take up the matter with the sponsor, local Indians who are known to the missing person as well as with the Saudi Foreign Ministry to trace the individual.

Since January 1997, a prominent case brought to government's attention was of Shri B.D. Baliga, who was employed as Materials Manager in Eastern Petro Chemicals, Jubail, Saudi Arabia, reported missing from 5.2.1997. On enquiries the Embassy learnt that he had been detained at the airport for unauthorisedly possessing some documents belonging to his employer. Through the efforts of the Embassy, Shri B.D. Baliga was released and subsequently returned to India.

[English]

Labour Laws

66. SHRI AYYANNA PATRUDU:

KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA:

SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken fresh initiatives for a critical review of exiting labour laws in the wake of emerging globalisation process and the need for internationalising labour laws;

(b) if so, the present status thereof and the action taken in this regard;

(c) the details of time bound action plan for the current year; and

(d) whether the role of State Governments therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) Review of labour laws is a continuous process and enacting of new laws and amendments to existing laws are made taking into account emerging factors. Views of State Governments are generally invited while amending the existing laws or enacting a new law.

Draft of Ninth Plan

67. SHRI NITISH KUMAR:

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH:

SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO:

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state

(a) whether the draft of the Ninth Plan has been finally approved;

(b) if so, whether the views of all the State